

Upper Back Workout Routine Key Points:

1. **What is the upper back?** The upper back is made up of several muscle groups, including the trapezius, latissimus dorsi, and rhomboids.
 - a. The trapezius is a broad, triangular muscle that extends from the base of the skull to the middle of the back and down to the shoulder blades. It is responsible for moving the shoulder blades and supporting the arms.
 - b. The latissimus dorsi is a large, flat muscle that runs from the middle of the back down to the lower back and into the top of the pelvis. It is responsible for moving the shoulder and upper arm.
 - c. The rhomboids are a pair of muscles located between the shoulder blades and the spine. They are responsible for pulling the shoulder blades together and rotating them downward.

Together, these muscle groups form the upper back and are responsible for movements such as pulling, lifting, and rotating the shoulders and upper arms.

2. **Prioritize the movements you want to improve on.** The following exercises are not in a specific order. The order will depend on your fitness goals. So for example, if you're looking to prioritize your lower lat development, make sure you prioritize the horizontal movement patterns that tuck your elbows.
3. **Base your training volume by what you can recover from.** Your goal should be to do the minimal amount of work while still progressing in your gains.
4. **Move your scapula at the proper times.** With the horizontal movements, you'll want to keep the scapula contracted throughout the movement until you are restricted from the stretch and stuck with the scapula.. So, if you're at the point of maximum contraction, you'll want to squeeze those scapulas together. If you're at the point of maximum stretch, you'll want to extend your scapulas beyond the end position.
5. **Horizontal back movements:** These are exercises that involve pulling or rowing movements with the arms moving horizontally, or parallel to the ground. These types of exercises can help to strengthen the muscles of the upper back, including the trapezius, latissimus dorsi, and rhomboids.
 - a. **Horizontal tucked elbow** back movements refer to exercises that involve pulling or rowing movements with the elbows tucked close to the body.
 - i. **Seated rows:** These can be performed using a cable machine, resistance bands, or a row machine. You'll sit with your knees bent and feet flat on the ground, and then reach out with straight arms to grab the handles. From there, you'll pull the handles towards your body, keeping your elbows close to your sides as you do so.
 - ii. **Bent-over rows:** To perform this exercise, stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and bend at the waist until your upper body is parallel to the ground. Hold a dumbbell in each hand with your palms facing each other, and then row the dumbbells up towards your chest, keeping your elbows close to your body as you do so.

- iii. **Inverted rows:** To perform this exercise, you'll need a bar or TRX straps that are suspended above your head. You'll start by standing under the bar with your feet shoulder-width apart and your hands gripping the bar. From there, you'll pull your body up towards the bar, keeping your elbows close to your body as you do so.
 - b. **Horizontal flared elbow** back movements refer to exercises that involve pulling or rowing movements with the elbows flared out to the sides.
 - i. **Wide-grip rows:** These can be performed using a cable machine, resistance bands, or a row machine. You'll sit with your knees bent and feet flat on the ground, and then reach out with straight arms to grab the handles with a wide grip. From there, you'll pull the handles towards your body, keeping your elbows flared out to the sides as you do so.
 - ii. **Wide-grip bent-over rows:** To perform this exercise, stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and bend at the waist until your upper body is parallel to the ground. Hold a dumbbell in each hand with your palms facing each other, and then row the dumbbells up towards your chest, keeping your elbows flared out to the sides as you do so.
 - iii. **Wide-grip inverted rows:** To perform this exercise, you'll need a bar or TRX straps that are suspended above your head. You'll start by standing under the bar with your feet shoulder-width apart and your hands gripping the bar with a wide grip. From there, you'll pull your body up towards the bar, keeping your elbows flared out to the sides as you do so.
6. **Vertical back movements:** Exercises that involve pulling or rowing movements with the arms moving vertically, or perpendicular to the ground. These types of exercises can help to strengthen the muscles of the upper back, including the trapezius, latissimus dorsi, and rhomboids.
- a. **Vertical tucked elbow** back movements likely refer to exercises that involve pulling or rowing movements with the elbows tucked close to the body.
 - i. **Pull-ups:** To perform this exercise, you'll need a bar that is suspended above your head. You'll start by grasping the bar with an overhand grip, palms facing away from your body. From there, you'll pull your body up towards the bar, keeping your elbows close to your body as you do so.
 - ii. **Lat pulldowns:** This exercise can be performed using a cable machine or resistance bands. You'll sit with your knees bent and feet flat on the ground, and then reach out with straight arms to grab the handles or bands. From there, you'll pull the handles or bands down towards your chest, keeping your elbows close to your body as you do so.
 - iii. **Cable pullovers:** To perform this exercise, you'll need a cable machine with a single handle attached to a high pulley. You'll stand facing the cable machine with your feet shoulder-width apart, and then reach out with straight arms to grab the handle. From there, you'll pull the handle down towards your waist, keeping your elbows close to your body as you do so.
 - b. **Vertical flared elbow** back movements likely refer to exercises that involve pulling or rowing movements with the elbows flared out to the sides.

- i. Wide-grip pull-ups: To perform this exercise, you'll need a bar that is suspended above your head. You'll start by grasping the bar with an overhand grip, palms facing away from your body and using a wider than shoulder-width grip. From there, you'll pull your body up towards the bar, keeping your elbows flared out to the sides as you do so.
- ii. Wide-grip lat pulldowns: This exercise can be performed using a cable machine or resistance bands. You'll sit with your knees bent and feet flat on the ground, and then reach out with straight arms to grab the handles or bands with a wide grip. From there, you'll pull the handles or bands down towards your chest, keeping your elbows flared out to the sides as you do so.
- iii. Cable pullovers: To perform this exercise, you'll need a cable machine with a single handle attached to a high pulley. You'll stand facing the cable machine with your feet shoulder-width apart, and then reach out with straight arms to grab the handle with a wide grip. From there, you'll pull the handle down towards your waist, keeping your elbows flared out to the sides as you do so.